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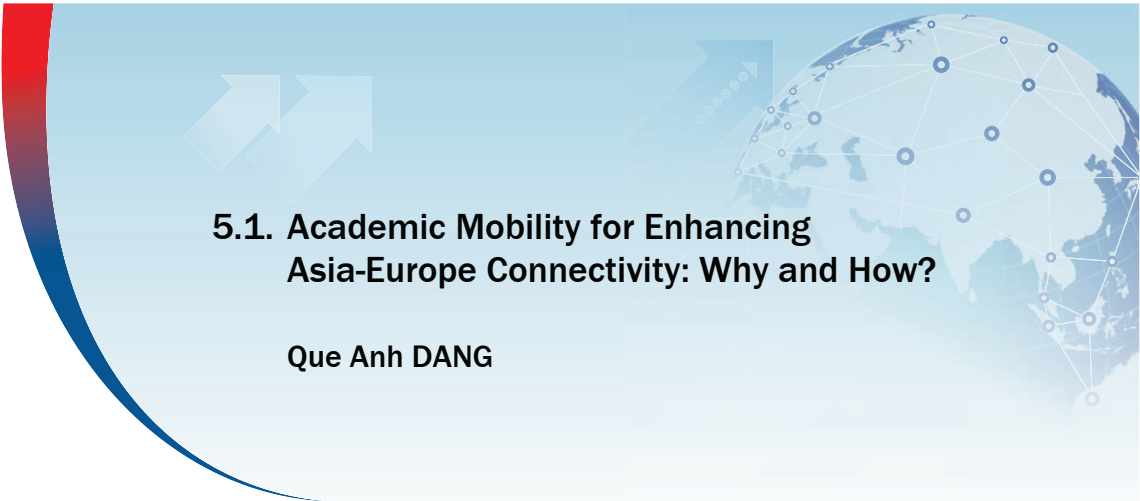
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## SECTION 5

# CONNECTIVITY THROUGH EDUCATION







## 5.1. Academic Mobility for Enhancing Asia-Europe Connectivity: Why and How?

Que Anh DANG

### Abstract

Academic mobility can contribute greatly to Asia-Europe connectivity in various sectors. The friendship and intellectual capacity created by mobile students and scholars are the key factors to strengthen cultural, scientific, economic and diplomatic ties among ASEM countries. In order to yield such benefits of both intra-regional and inter-regional mobility, and to minimise the adverse effects, ASEM needs innovative policy solutions. This paper argues that education policy-making is value-laden in the sense that values pervade policy processes and policy contents, while values are also justifications for a policy and criteria for evaluating its implementation. Democratic equality, social mobility, and social efficiency are seen as the common values that guide education policies. Academic mobility is understood essentially as a process of individuals' self-formation and self-cultivation, which impacts on productivity, innovation, and social transformation, including reforming and improving education systems. Academic mobility is a way to achieving social mobility that ought to yield benefits, not only for deserving individuals, but also to society as a whole.

The history of Asia-Europe academic exchange, and current ASEM policies, demonstrate that cross-border academic mobility encompasses different political, economic, and cultural/intellectual interests at regional, national, institutional, and individual levels. This necessitates ASEM education policymakers to work across sectors and consider a variety of inter-related factors that influence patterns of academic mobility, including domestic education provision, economics, demographics, labour market requirements, and immigration policies. It is proposed that ASEM education policies should strike a balance between educational, social, and economic values of mobility to enhance Asia-Europe connectivity in the long term.

## 5. Connectivity through Education

### 1. Academic mobility and Asia-Europe connectivity

*“What does ASEM mean for people in everyday life?*

*One of the best examples is the ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme, which aims at exchanging students, scholars and professors between Asia and Europe.*

*Exchanging of students is a brilliant way to ensure greater understanding between our regions across cultural, social, historic and religious differences.”*

*(The Danish Prime Minister’s Opening Speech at the 4th ASEM Summit, 2002)*

There is a call for reciprocal educational exchange to promote cultural understanding and peace-making in this opening speech. International student mobility has, inter alia, been a means of broadening one’s horizon, enhancing respect for other cultures, reducing prejudice, and correcting stereotypes. In his speech, alongside these humanistic values, the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, also firmly believed in the economic impact of cross-border education. He highlighted that “human resources development, educational exchange and lifelong learning can be utilised to reap the benefits of globalisation and address its adverse consequences” and, in turn, “economic growth can result in overall progress in the social sphere and thus might help counter some of the root causes of intolerance and extremism”.

The decade after this speech has seen more students travelling beyond their national borders to seek international education, and cross-cultural experience, to enhance their social mobility and life chances. In 2012, there were 4.5 million students (up from 2.1 million in 2000) studying outside their country of citizenship and 53% were from Asia.<sup>1</sup> Governments and universities also view the movement of students as a new opportunity<sup>2</sup>, so they work together to develop various policies to promote international academic mobility. The European Erasmus student exchange scheme is a successful example. Between 1987 and 2013, over three million students, from more than 4,000 European higher education institutions, participated in Erasmus mobility.<sup>3</sup> In these contexts, Asia and Europe have forged a high-level strategic inter-regional educational partnership called the ASEM Education Process and envisaged an ASEM education area to increase knowledge exchange and academic mobility among the current 51 partners.<sup>4</sup> With the inauguration of the biennial Asia-Europe Meeting of the Ministers for Education (ASEM ME) in 2008, academic mobility has been brought into the heart of inter-regional strategies to enhance economic, political, and cultural connectivity.

The European Union (EU) has implemented regional integration, whereas the Asian countries have invested effort in strengthening regional connectivity. The term regional connectivity has become a policy discourse in Asia and it frequently refers to the creation of regional hard and soft infrastructure to facilitate the flow of goods, services, people, and knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> OECD, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Rizvi and Lingard, 2010

<sup>3</sup> The Erasmus Impact Study, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> ASEM ME5, 2015

<sup>5</sup> Bhattacharya, 2010

The regional institutions, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP<sup>6</sup>), develop various master plans for regional connectivity, which aim at enhancing physical connectivity (transportation), institutional connectivity (rules and regulations) and people-to-people connectivity (knowledge and culture). Samples are the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity<sup>7</sup> and APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike the EU, ASEM is not a result of an integration process, rather a conglomerate of connectivity in many sectors. Asia-Europe connectivity, has become a popular headline for many forums and appeared in the ASEM Summit chair's statements with different meanings evolving over the years.

Connectivity was used for the first time in the 2006 Summit statement to denote the inter-regional, high-speed Internet connectivity for research and education.<sup>9</sup> The 2010 Summit emphasised connectivity via interactions between the people of Europe and Asia, whereas the 2012 Summit highlighted the economic outcomes of intra- and inter-regional connectivity in transport infrastructure. At the 2014 Summit, connectivity became a keyword with various meanings and expanded scope ranging from financial, economic, trade, investment and energy to institutional linkages, information, knowledge, people, think tanks and the academic community. There is also a plan to establish an ASEM working group on connectivity.<sup>10</sup> Although the meaning is rather vague, there seems to be positive connotations in every usage of the word. Overall, connectivity is seen as bringing about competitive advantages for all those connected.

This chapter explores ASEM higher education and research connectivity through academic mobility and its impact on individuals and education systems. The term academic mobility may entail physical mobility, virtual mobility, short-term mobility (credit mobility), degree mobility, or mobility across disciplines, and across sectors (e.g. between academia and industry for research or internship). This chapter focuses only on the cross-border academic mobility between ASEM countries, specifically, the academically motivated geographical movements of students and academics, generally in higher education, from their home institution to another to study or work (teaching and/or research) for a period of time.<sup>11</sup> Reviewing the history of Asia-Europe academic mobility and analysing ASEM policies, this chapter examines why academic mobility has become a priority of ASEM cooperation, what key values of academic mobility should be promoted in the ASEM Education Area, what the major challenges are, and how they may be tackled in order to enhance Asia-Europe connectivity in the long term.

<sup>6</sup> Strengthening intraregional and interregional connectivity in Asia and the Pacific [http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E71\\_RES8E.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E71_RES8E.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity [http://www.asean.org/storage/images/ASEAN\\_RTK\\_2014/4\\_Master\\_Plan\\_on\\_ASEAN\\_Connectivity.pdf](http://www.asean.org/storage/images/ASEAN_RTK_2014/4_Master_Plan_on_ASEAN_Connectivity.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025 [http://www.apec.org/Meeting-Papers/Leaders-Declarations/2014/2014\\_aelm/2014\\_aelm\\_annexd.aspx](http://www.apec.org/Meeting-Papers/Leaders-Declarations/2014/2014_aelm/2014_aelm_annexd.aspx).

<sup>9</sup> The Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN) <http://tein4.net/tein4/project/objectives.do>.

<sup>10</sup> ASEM, 2014

<sup>11</sup> Leung, 2013

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### 2. Education policy making: a value-laden process

Policy making can be seen as the course of action relating to the selection of goals and the definition of values that determine education practices and their consequences. Values pervade policy making processes and policy contents.<sup>12</sup> Values are also justifications for a policy and criteria to evaluate its implementation. Three values commonly found in education policies are democratic equality, social mobility and social efficiency, which can be useful in understanding the construction of academic mobility policies.

#### 2.1. Democratic equality

The policies led by the value of democratic equality emphasise the need for education to facilitate the development of citizens who can participate in democratic communities. Therefore, the primary purpose of education is to educate students to realise their full potential and create citizens able to maximise personal development and responsibility for the community. The focus is more social and cultural than economic. From this perspective, academic mobility can be understood as a self-formation process in which mobile students experience changes in their behaviours of self-cultivation and self-improvement.<sup>13</sup> While all education can be understood as a process of personal growth, international education entails significant transformation. For example, mobility may alter one's understanding of societies and impact on political, economic and socio-cultural practices, such as changing practices both at home and host institutions, or reforming education systems. Education policies driven by this value often aim at improving pedagogies and curricula and enhancing the learning experience of international students.

#### 2.2. Social mobility

Social mobility refers to the movement of members of a society up the social ladder of income, status and lifestyle<sup>14</sup> according to meritocratic principles. The compelling argument is that the selection of individuals for jobs on the basis of merit is a more efficient use of the available talent pool because jobs will be undertaken by individuals possessing the most suitable attributes. Therefore, education, including international education, is widely recognised as an effective mechanism for achieving social mobility<sup>15</sup> and for building a just, efficient, and stable society because of the transformation in the distribution of resources, opportunities or social status of individuals, families or groups.<sup>16</sup> By implication, increasing social mobility should yield benefits, not only for deserving individuals, but for society as a whole.<sup>17</sup>

Social mobility, often measured by the positive occupational transition of individuals, can be inter-generational mobility. For instance, children have international education experience and better career prospects than their parents, therefore the degree of (dis)advantaged inheritance from parents to their children can change. Social mobility can also be intra-generational mobility over a period of time, for example, academics use their international mobility as a springboard for career advancement.

<sup>12</sup> Rizvi and Lingard, 2010

<sup>13</sup> Marginson, 2014; Tran 2015

<sup>14</sup> Hasley, 2013

<sup>15</sup> Breen et al., 2014

<sup>16</sup> Kaufmann et al., 2004

<sup>17</sup> Sturgis and Buscha, 2015

However, social mobility has its own inherent dilemma as it presupposes the existence of social stratification. International academic mobility, on the one hand, facilitates social mobility and on the other, reproduces differences between people and classes because mobile individuals are equipped with social and cultural capital that can be deployed over their lifetime for social and economic enhancement.<sup>18</sup> Nowadays, the politics of social mobility is increasingly premised on the neoliberal theory that views markets, rather than the meritocratic principle, as the way to an efficient, fair, and competitive society.<sup>19</sup> Hence, academic mobility is often conceptualised as a capital which exists in different forms, such as economic, social, and cultural capital<sup>20</sup>, which are convertible into one another.<sup>21</sup> Academic mobility constitutes a set of useable resources, such as economic capital (scholarships, research grants or self-investment) and/or cultural capital (competences, language skills, academic qualifications, intellectual capacity), social capital (relations, networks, membership of high-level committees), and symbolic capital (reputation, prestige, publications in high-impact journals). The acquisition of these resources gives individuals access to power or social position, and ultimately to material wealth.<sup>22</sup>

The education policies that view academic mobility as capital often aim to strengthen instruments, e.g. comparability tools, qualifications frameworks for recognition, credit transfer systems, and other regulations which facilitate academic mobility, but leave the process of social formation to the market. Such policies favour competition and the ability of the market to reconcile the value of equality.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.3. Social efficiency

While social mobility value focuses exclusively on individuals, the social efficiency approach requires education to contribute to organisational efficiency, economic productivity, and outcomes. Education is considered as both a public and private good, serving the social and economic development of a community, and at the same time, individual interests within a competitive labour market. Academic mobility, in this view, is often linked to policies to attract highly skilled workers for the knowledge economy of the more advanced nations.<sup>24</sup> Most ASEM countries devise policies that treat the impact of academic mobility not only as a personal matter, but also as an institutional, national, even supra-regional matter. Many governments and universities are involved in stimulating the global circulation of students and academics, expecting that they will have a positive effect on their universities' position in the global knowledge network.

To sum up, policies on academic mobility are value-laden, but they cannot simply be inferred from a particular value position, as these values are continuously constructed and re-constructed over time. There is always a certain level of conflict between values and in policy deliberations, while the priority of one value over others is constantly negotiated. Policymakers seek to resolve this conflict in various ways, either by trade-offs between values, by side-lining a particular value, or redefining or re-articulating its meaning in different contexts.

<sup>18</sup> Brooks and Waters, 2010; Findlay et al., 2011

<sup>19</sup> Brown et al., 2013

<sup>20</sup> Bourdieu, 1986

<sup>21</sup> Brooks and Waters, 2010

<sup>22</sup> Leung, 2013

<sup>23</sup> Rizvi and Lingard, 2010

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



## 5. Connectivity through Education

### 3. Changing rationales of Asia-Europe academic mobility

Academic mobility within, and between, Asia and Europe is not a new phenomenon, but the logic underlying international mobility has greatly varied over time.<sup>25</sup> An understanding of such changing rationales would be beneficial for policy evaluation and policy development.

In Asia, around the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, Japan and Korea sent students and scholars, including many monks, to China to study and translate Buddhist texts.<sup>26</sup> During the Tang Dynasty, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Chinese imperial civil service examinations, which were open to all on a meritocratic selection principle, attracted Korean scholars and students to China to study and prepare for the examinations.<sup>27</sup> Western scholars travelled long distances to Indian universities, not only to study arts, architecture and religion, but also the sciences and mathematics. In parallel, medieval European universities, such as Bologna, attracted students from Asia and the Middle East.<sup>28</sup> The rationale for international mobility has primarily been to search for new knowledge not available within the home nation.

During the colonial period from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, student mobility between Asia and Europe was mainly linked to the civilising mission, designed to develop a local elite that was loyal to the economic and political interests of the colonial powers and was able to manage local populations. The host university's role was to promote the Western ideas of modernity in meeting the political needs of the empires. The Asian graduates possessed a modernist disposition and knowledge from European universities which enabled them to maintain their position of power.<sup>29</sup> Universities in the French and British colonies were established from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and their academic staff members were recruited mainly from the motherlands and from returned graduates.<sup>30</sup> In this way, academic mobility serves as a social technology designed to (re)produce power, social classes, and inequality.<sup>31</sup>

In the post-colonial period, around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, academic mobility assumed a new rationale, driven by the discourses of developmentalism and nationalism.<sup>32</sup> First World countries provided scholarships, as part of their overseas aid programmes, for students from the newly independent countries in Asia, in order to help them in their nation-building projects. The Colombo Plan, initiated in the early 1950s within the British Commonwealth<sup>33</sup>, was an example of such an overseas aid policy, with the aim of transferring knowledge and building the local capacity needed to develop the social, administrative, and economic infrastructure of South Asia.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Hung and Wakabayashi, 2005

<sup>27</sup> Kim, 2009

<sup>28</sup> Rizvi, 2011

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 28

<sup>30</sup> Kim, 2009

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 28

<sup>32</sup> Rizvi and Lingard, 2010

<sup>33</sup> The Colombo Plan, <http://www.colombo-plan.org/index.php/about-cps/history/>.

<sup>34</sup> The New Colombo Programme today provides opportunities for Australian undergraduate students to undertake semester-based study and internships or mentorships in participating Indo-Pacific locations, <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/scholarship-program/pages/scholarship-program.aspx>.

This kind of aid programme was also crafted as a strategy in public diplomacy of the First World countries during the Cold War. In response to the former USSR's strategy to educate a large number of international students, the Colombo Plan, and other national scholarship schemes, e.g. the German Academic Exchange Service from 1950 and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation from 1953, provided financial aid to students from Third World countries to study at First World universities. In this geopolitical context, academic mobility was a way to promote Western democracy and capitalism<sup>35</sup>, thus exerting soft power, conceived as a means of attracting and implanting power.<sup>36</sup>

In the past two decades of the globalisation era, the dominant discourse of the knowledge economy has viewed academic mobility more as global trade and a source of income for some countries to compensate for state disinvestment.<sup>37</sup> Education is increasingly considered as an export industry, driven by the demand for academic mobility, most notably in the rapidly developing economies of Asia.<sup>38</sup> This demand has also enabled countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia to set themselves up as major suppliers. Countries like Singapore, Malaysia, China, Korea and Japan<sup>39</sup> are now seeking to develop a range of policies to enter this market.

Alongside the recruitment of international fee-paying students, many governments continue to offer scholarships, and have launched new immigration policies to attract and retain highly skilled workers.<sup>40</sup> National scholarship schemes<sup>41</sup>, such as: Australia Awards; Chevening (UK); the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Fellowships; Singapore's ASEAN scholarships; Dutch Orange Tulip Scholarship Programmes; DAAD Scholarships and Grants (Germany); the Eiffel Excellence Scholarship Programme (France); and regional scholarships schemes, such as Erasmus Mundus and Marie Skłodowska-Curie, are not confined to the developing world, but target specific countries or regions in the developed world to attract the best and brightest brains, thus establishing stronger global knowledge networks. The EU introduced the Scientific Visa in 2005 and the Blue Card in 2009 to expedite the entry of knowledge workers, many of whom are international graduates already residing in Europe.<sup>42</sup> These recruitment policies reflect strategic calculations made by the state, institutions, and individuals that consider the value of academic mobility mainly in economic terms, namely returns on educational investment and better employment prospects.<sup>43</sup>

By and large, the rationales and outcomes of academic mobility policies have shifted over time, but have always been linked to political agendas, and increasingly to the instrumental purposes of human capital development and economic maximisation.

<sup>35</sup> Stein and de Andreotti, 2015

<sup>36</sup> Nye, 2004

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 35

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 28

<sup>39</sup> Countries are listed in the order of who first took on the market approach to education.

<sup>40</sup> Geddie, 2015; Gribble and Blackmore, 2012; Mosneaga and Winther, 2013

<sup>41</sup> National scholarship schemes are presented in the chronological order.

<sup>42</sup> Cerna and Chou, 2014

<sup>43</sup> Rizvi, 2011

## 5. Connectivity through Education

### 4. ASEM Education Process and academic mobility

#### 4.1. Institutional structure, policy actors and agenda

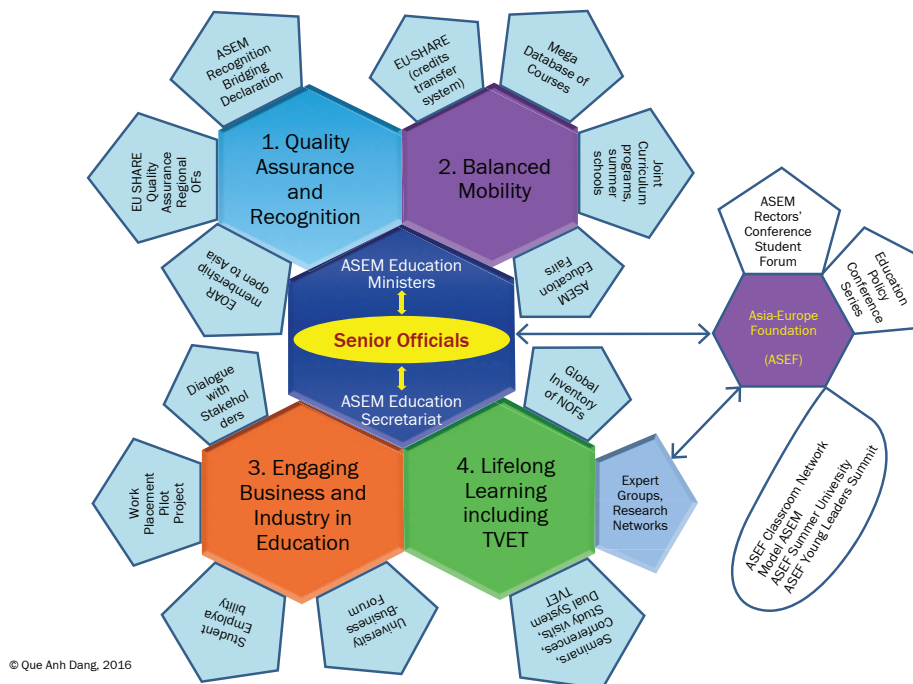
The first ASEM Summit of Heads of State and Government in 1996 set out:

“to foster exchange of students and scholars with a view to developing a better understanding of the cultures, histories and business practices of both regions.”<sup>44</sup>

The text was crafted shortly after the end of the Cold War by the officials of foreign affairs ministries with a tone of diplomacy and rediscovery of each other. The aim of academic mobility was to create generations of students and scholars who could enhance knowledge about each other’s cultures and position one region into the other.

The ASEM Education Ministers met in 2008 to forge a strategic educational partnership and start the ASEM Education Process. The institutional structure, at the time of writing, is captured in Figure 1 which depicts the governance model with a four-point agenda, key actors, projects, multi-layered interactions, and connections.

Figure 1: ASEM education agenda and actors



Source: The author's compilation, 2016

<sup>44</sup> ASEM 1996, §19

This multi-layered structure facilitates multilateral government-to-government and bilateral partnerships, as well as networks of non-governmental stakeholders which strengthen the connections within, and between, the two regions. Figure 1 also depicts the authority patterns and the allocated tasks and responsibilities among state and non-state actors. The senior officials, and their conception of an ASEM Education Area, are at the heart of the process where the actual decision-making activities occur in practice. The senior officials not only devise the agenda for the ministers' meetings, but also prepare the chair's conclusions, the most visible and important policy document of the process, similar to the Bologna Process Communiqués. The chair's conclusions show the ministers' political viewpoints, the common goals, achievements, new initiatives, and activities. This document is discussed extensively at the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), translated into national languages, where required, and enacted under the leadership of the senior officials in their national contexts.

In the past seven years of developing ASEM high-level educational partnership, academic mobility has always been one of the strategic goals of ASEM education ministers, and a way to ensure the success of people.

*"[T]he Ministers emphasised the need for an area where mobility of students, teachers, researchers, ideas and knowledge would be the core common goal. The Ministers were convinced that it would be possible to ensure that people would be equipped to operate successfully in an international and global environment by reinforcing the collaboration and mobility."*<sup>45</sup>

This chair's statement was written in the context of Europe celebrating the achievement of the decade-long Bologna Process, resulting in an unprecedented European Higher Education Area (EHEA) for increased student mobility. As it was crafted by officials from education ministries, and backed up by the success in Europe, this policy text has an optimistic tone: "...the ministers were convinced that it would be possible to ensure... [that] people operate successfully". What is new in this ASEM text is the "the need for an area", a new, larger, higher education space conjoining the two regions to accelerate student mobility, and subsequently the flows of skilled labour. In this imagined common space, student mobility between Asia and Europe can be enhanced:

...“ by intensifying promotional activities in both regions, appointing competent students and staff with a mobility experience as “ambassadors for mobility” in each ASEM country and organising ASEM education fairs in Asia and Europe (e.g. with EU support)”.<sup>46</sup>

The text entails technical details of specific policy tools which champion academic mobility and introduce a business model of an ASEM education fair, which appears to resemble, and expand, the concept of the European Higher Education Fairs<sup>47</sup>, a regional branding initiative. Although the ASEM education fair has yet to take place, the desired massive scale of academic mobility in 51 ASEM member countries would indicate the significance of an ASEM Education Area.

<sup>45</sup> ASEM ME5, 2015, italics by the author

<sup>46</sup> ASEM ME3, 2011

<sup>47</sup> European Higher Education Fairs <http://www.ehef.asia/fairs>.

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Furthermore, ASEM education ministers go on to elaborate the goal explicitly:

“Inter-regional exchange of students and staff leads to an increase in internationally trained and experienced labour force and lays the ground for new partnerships in Asia and Europe.”<sup>48</sup>

This policy goal is driven by the social efficiency value that measures the outcome of academic mobility as an “internationally trained and experienced labour force”, and indicates that such human capital can be converted into other forms of capital, i.e. the new partnerships which mobilities afford. In this way, mobility is not a simple sojourn, but rather a process of sowing seeds for longer-term partnerships and connectivity.

ASEM policy on mobility also manifests a negotiation between different values: increase labour force and develop active citizens. For example, in the same conclusions of ASEM ME4 in 2013, the Malaysian chair emphasised the development of citizens and social cohesion as an important goal of ASEM education partnership, which is to:

“contribute to the development of highly qualified and active citizens who have a strong sense of social responsibility, are open-minded and respect cultural diversity.” [...]

“reiterate the importance of education and training for balanced, sustainable and inclusive growth in Asia and Europe, as well as for democracy, cultural diversity and social cohesion in both regions.”<sup>49</sup>

The policy challenge is to strike a balance between these humanistic values and the economic view of academic mobility.

### 4.2. Imbalanced mobility

Another reason for the mobility topic to be high on the ASEM agenda is that it depicts asymmetrical relationships between ASEM education systems. As shown in Figure 1, the adjective balanced gives specific meaning to mobility in the ASEM context. In the past, in the mind of European and Asian leaders, balanced was about attracting more Asian students to Europe – therefore balancing the number of Asian students studying in the USA with that in Europe. In a modern ASEM context, balanced means attracting more European students to Asian universities. The two following tables illustrate the statistics of Asian<sup>50</sup> mobile students in Europe and North America between 2008 and 2013.

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<sup>48</sup> ASEM ME4, 2013

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Asian students in these tables include those from other Asian countries than the current 21 Asian ASEM countries.

**Table 1: Inbound internationally mobile students from Asia at tertiary education level in 30 European ASEM countries, 2008-2013**

Indicator	Inbound internationally mobile students from Asia, both sexes (number)					
Time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Country (30 European ASEM partners)</b>						
Austria	7,081	7,837	8,429	8,370	6,357	7,617
Belgium	53	1,556	2,798	3,653	3,993	2,523
Bulgaria	3,715	4,340	5,234	5,601	5,970	5,966
Croatia	4	6	7	3	23	n/a
Cyprus	5,395	7,392	7,632	5,975	3,907	2,364
Czech Republic	2,713	3,011	3,440	3,743	4,176	4,588
Denmark	1,370	2,245	2,801	2,353	2,137	3,296
Estonia	78	107	146	207	270	291
Finland	3,721	4,387	5,175	5,984	7,035	7,698
France	51,021	55,123	56,680	58,516	58,777	53,086
Germany	62,439	65,597	67,551	n/a	n/a	59,741
Greece	n/a	n/a	14,971	15,144	14,625	n/a
Hungary	2,657	2,689	3,286	3,666	3,805	4,550
Ireland	3,516	3,785	4,793	2,535	3,585	5,294
Italy	9,040	12,750	12,604	16,718	19,480	22,662
Latvia	293	343	319	347	518	903
Lithuania	430	356	370	372	425	541
Luxembourg	55	n/a	124	n/a	163	199
Malta	132	121	n/a	122	142	133
Netherlands	3,112	3,130	3,410	6,119	9,686	n/a
Norway	2,716	3,025	3,078	3,400	3,459	3,204
Poland	2,858	3,186	3,479	3,707	3,985	4,493
Portugal	224	330	419	647	1,011	1,170
Romania	2,251	2,179	2,653	3,118	n/a	4,122
Slovakia	810	692	655	597	552	603
Slovenia	19	51	54	76	80	83

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<b>Spain</b>	894	1,734	2,112	2,769	3,269	3,178
<b>Sweden</b>	6,265	10,904	14,300	16,808	12,020	8,516
<b>Switzerland</b>	3,209	3,544	3,974	4,380	4,762	5,102
<b>United Kingdom</b>	160,715	178,513	200,865	217,911	226,481	223,159
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>336,786</b>	<b>378,933</b>	<b>431,359</b>	<b>392,841</b>	<b>400,693</b>	<b>435,082</b>

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, extracted in February 2016. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>

**Table 2: Inbound internationally mobile students from Asia at tertiary education level in Canada and the United States, 2008-2013**

Indicator	Inbound internationally mobile students from Asia, both sexes (number)					
Time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Country</b>						
<b>Canada</b>	44,128	52,185	57,549	59,286	76,668	n/a
<b>United States of America</b>	419,580	451,725	479,397	508,441	542,748	583,705
<b>Total</b>	<b>463,708</b>	<b>503,910</b>	<b>536,946</b>	<b>567,727</b>	<b>619,416</b>	<b>583,705</b>

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, extracted in February 2016. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>

Although the absolute figures of Asian students in Europe and North America are still imbalanced, this is not the topic of discussion at ASEM meetings. The phrase balanced mobility expresses the ministers' other concern, which has become a recurrent theme at all of their meetings.

"[...] student mobility between both regions is notably imbalanced. Many more Asian students study in Europe than Europeans in Asia. It was felt in previous Ministerial Meetings that measures should be taken to better balance mobility flows, especially by motivating more European students to spend at least part of their studies in Asia. To this end, mobility-friendly frameworks concerning information, funding and study conditions must be further developed."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> ASEM ME4, 2013

This passage indicates the asymmetric education relation between Asia and Europe in a very subtle language. Phrases like “it was felt that” and “to better balance”, suggest that the balance might be improved, but never become an absolute balance. The phrase “more European students [...] to spend at least part of their studies in Asia” indicates a modest wish for an apparent balance, and explicitly accepts the perception (also reality) that many universities in Asia are not of comparable quality to those in Europe. Also, as a senior official of Thailand’s Higher Education Commission pointed out: “It would never be possible to balance flows, as Asia has a huge young population compared to Europe.”<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, both Europe and Asia are implementing strategies to promote intra-regional mobility, as cross-regional mobility is seen as a more complex and costly project. In Europe, the strategy paper *Mobility for Better Learning*, adopted by the EHEA ministerial conference in 2012, encourages member countries to strive for more, and better balanced, mobility inside, and outside of, the EHEA. In Asia, there is also an emerging view that encourages more Asian students to study closer to home. Regional schemes, such as ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) and the ASEAN University Network (AUN), are mainly to boost intra-regional mobility. Moreover, many countries that have traditionally sent students are now diversifying their domestic provision of higher education, and enhancing its quality, through partnerships with Western universities and, increasingly, with universities from neighbouring countries. The new educational hubs in Asia attract students from afar, and from within the region.

**Table 3: Total international student enrolment in selected Asian countries**

Country	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
China	328,330	356,499	377,054
Australia	245,531	247,093	269,752
Japan	137,756	135,519	139,185
Malaysia	86,923 (2010)	n/a	n/a
New Zealand	48,104	41,609	46,659

Source: Author’s compilation from <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Project-Atlas>

China has recruited increasing numbers of international students in recent years with roughly around 42% on full degree mobility and 58% on non-degree mobility. China has a target to reach 500,000 in 2020.<sup>53</sup> The majority of international students are from Asia, the USA and France as shown in Figure 2 below.

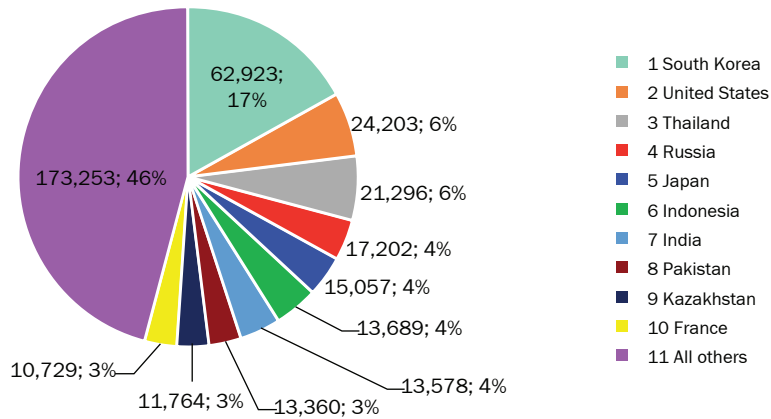
<sup>52</sup> Thailand’s presentation delivered at the 3rd ASEM Rectors’ Conference at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, September 2012. The author’s direct observation at the event.

<sup>53</sup> <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/11/the-state-of-international-student-mobility-in-2015/>.



## 5. Connectivity through Education

**Figure 2: Top 10 sending places of origin and number/percentage of international student enrolment in China 2014**



Source: Author's compilation from <http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/China/International-Students-In-China>

Similarly, Japan has also increased its recruitment and set a goal of hosting 300,000 international students by 2020.<sup>54</sup> More than 90% of them are currently from Asia, with the main sources China, Korea, Viet Nam, Nepal, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Myanmar).

In summary, Asia and Europe pursue their objectives of increasing intra-regional mobility, and in parallel promote extra-regional mobility to strengthen Asia-Europe connectivity. Balanced mobility in the ASEM context has shifted its focus to encourage more European students and scholars to Asian universities to enhance reciprocal exchange.

<sup>54</sup> The "300000 Foreign Students Plan" <http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/toj/toj09e.html>.

#### 4.3. Obstacles to academic mobility

Academic mobility faces a series of obstacles at different levels. These include personal motivation, funding, access, academic standards, language skills, recognition of study periods and foreign qualifications, immigration regulations and tenure contracts of staff. All impact greatly on the expansion or restriction of academic mobility. To tackle some of these obstacles, ASEM senior officials have launched different pilot projects, such as the Beijing Bridging Declaration on Recognition of Qualifications, ASEMUNDUS, which links European and Asian universities and ASEM joint degree programmes in tourism and hospitality, with a view to enhancing the curriculum and the mobility of students and teachers.

Aware of shrinking funding, a fundamental obstacle to mobility, ASEM Ministers:

“... [Re]affirmed that equal access to interregional learning experiences should be ensured through sufficient public student support and the development of mobility opportunities.”<sup>55</sup>

At ASEM ME5 in April 2015, ASEM partners confirmed their financial commitment to support academic mobility. The European Commission offers Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarships. The EU-funded SHARE project<sup>56</sup> provides technical and financial resources for enhancing ASEAN regional quality assurance, credit transfer systems, qualification frameworks and scholarships for mobility. ASEM-DUO scheme continues to offer student and professorial exchanges on a reciprocal basis. China's One Belt, One Road<sup>57</sup> Plan offers tens of thousands of Chinese government scholarships to students from the countries along the Belt and Road. Numerous other national scholarship schemes, and bilateral partnerships of ASEM countries, also contribute to inter-regional mobility. Furthermore, the European Research Area has launched the initiative EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion<sup>58</sup> to enhance research collaboration between Europe and the world. The scheme is particularly active in Asia.

<sup>55</sup> ASEM ME4, 2013

<sup>56</sup> EU SHARE: European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region. <http://www.share-asean.eu/>

<sup>57</sup> In March 2015, China's National Development and Reform Commission joined its ministries of foreign affairs and commerce to release an expansive blueprint for what it calls the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road—often shortened to “One Belt, One Road”. It is aimed at fostering collaboration along the historic Silk Road and maritime routes, which would pass through Southeast Asia, Middle East and East Africa, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-03/28/c\\_134105858.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-03/28/c_134105858.htm);  
Policy Brief on the ‘One Belt and One Road’ Plan, [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China\\_analysis\\_belt\\_road.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China_analysis_belt_road.pdf);  
Commentary, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2015-04-19/chinas-road-rules>.

<sup>58</sup> EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion, <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/links/index>.

## 5. Connectivity through Education

Social and cultural barriers impact greatly on mobile students and scholars. In daily life, they look to acquire personal sensibilities, engage in the local environment, build social networks and lasting friendship, and obtain new values in their country of education. However, these potential benefits of mobility should not be romanticised. In practice, mobile students and scholars encounter many contradictions and uncertainties. As outsiders, mobile students have ambiguous meanings for the host country. On one hand, they are valued and welcomed because they are seen as a source of revenue, research labour, future human capital, and international ambassadors. On the other hand, they trigger border anxiety and bureaucratic categorisation. As citizens of two national jurisdictions and with two political relationships, mobile students often cannot exercise the full rights and entitlements of citizens in either home or host country.<sup>59</sup> In day-to-day life, many have to cope with negative and discriminatory experiences. Even when they are welcomed in the host countries, they may quickly become categorised as a threat if their presence and their benefits endanger the entitlements and opportunities of the local people.

Other challenges have emerged in the countries which send most students abroad. According to market rules, the material and symbolic value of foreign academic qualifications also depend on scarcity<sup>60</sup> and the increased volume of mobility may diminish this exclusiveness and reduce the value of international credentials. Additionally, mobile students and young academics may face the situation where fast changes are happening at home while they are studying abroad, and they may be left isolated if they are not established in the local networks. Mobile students and academics do not always harvest the best of both worlds. The different national and institutional contexts in home and foreign countries may restrain their ability to engage in knowledge production and dissemination and to translate and transfer various elements of academic fields across boundaries.

### 5. Academic mobility and brain circulation

Academic mobility also poses challenges for governments in the sending countries. These are often developing countries, and can be anxious about losing their talent, in whom they have invested through, at least, their initial education, to more developed countries. This phenomenon is widely known as "brain drain". The term was coined by the British Royal Society to describe the outflow of British and European scientists to North America in the 1950s. In the 1970s, the brain drain issue came to be associated with the emigration of highly skilled individuals from developing to advanced countries.<sup>61</sup> Today, this pattern of a one-way flow of qualified workforce has changed to a multi-directional movement, and so requires a new understanding.

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<sup>59</sup> Marginson, 2012

<sup>60</sup> Bourdieu, 1986

<sup>61</sup> Liu-Farrer, 2009

The brain drain concept is based on a zero-sum thinking in which one nation's loss is another's gain. This, in turn, derives from the belief that relationships between nation-states are inevitably competitive. The brains involved are not only a resource for the nation-state but belong to it and can therefore be lost to it, or gained by it. This assumption also sees knowledge as embodied and territorial. Knowledge is contained within the brain, therefore when the body and brain leave a particular territory the knowledge leaves too. In this view, the brains tend to be conceived in individualistic, instrumental, almost nationalistic ways, in the sense that there is a conflation of the body with the nation.<sup>62</sup> These assumptions are implausible, but they persist.

In today's global knowledge economy, highly skilled professionals seek better standards of living, higher salaries, better access to advanced technology, and more stable political conditions in different places worldwide.<sup>63</sup> This phenomenon causes dilemmas and challenges for policy makers, in both developing and developed countries. The developed countries seek to attract qualified workers for their knowledge economy, but insist on preventing the movement of low-skilled workers and refugees. Many developing countries have become reliant on the remittances sent home by emigrants, but this is not a long-term solution to their social and economic development.<sup>64</sup> In the globalisation era, the issue is no longer where people are physically located, but what contribution they are able to make to the social, cultural and economic development of the (multiple) countries with which they identify.<sup>65</sup> This new conceptual understanding of mobility is known as brain circulation, which helps broaden views on the mobility of knowledge workers for Asia-Europe connectivity.

In practice, ASEM countries introduce policies linking academic mobility and migration. For example, to minimise the reverse brain drain, some receiving countries, which offer free higher education and/or scholarships, retain a certain share of qualified foreign graduates, who may be obliged to work in the host countries for a period of time upon their graduation. This retention can be seen as compensation for the investment which has been made in international students.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, many sending countries have introduced policies to reduce the emigration of qualified workers by improving domestic study options with joint programmes and foreign campuses, by promoting the return of graduates, and by engaging with diaspora networks.<sup>67</sup>

In summary, brain circulation is the material, social, and intellectual outcome of academic mobility. The idea of circulatory movement accounts for transient flows of graduates, academics, etc. and increases the connectivity between them, their home country, and other countries with which they identify. Brain circulation offers a conceptual alternative to the blurred boundary between mobility and migration.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Fahey and Kenway, 2010

<sup>63</sup> Rizvi, 2005

<sup>64</sup> Rizvi and Lingard, 2010

<sup>65</sup> Rizvi, 2011; Welch, 2015

<sup>66</sup> Suter and Jandl, 2008

<sup>67</sup> Ziguras and Gribble, 2015

<sup>68</sup> Jöns, 2009

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### 6. Concluding thoughts

The history of Asia-Europe academic mobility over the centuries has contributed to people-to-people connectivity. The current ASEM education process aims at increasing mobility and making a more profound impact on Asia-Europe connectivity across various sectors. This is premised on the belief that the friendships, social connections and intellectual capacity created by mobile students and scholars can bind them together, thus rejuvenating scientific, cultural, economic, and diplomatic connectivity among ASEM countries. In order to reap such benefits, efforts should be made to devise effective policies and implementation plans for maximising mobility opportunities and minimising adverse effects.

Based on the analysis in previous sections, there seem to be two policy streams in the ASEM education process. The European ASEM countries continue to promote intra-regional mobility, but increasingly encourage their students to study outside Europe, especially in Asia. The introduction of Erasmus+, Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarships, and portable financial support (grants or loans) and the emergence of the ASEM Education Area, with an extended list of Asian countries to choose from, are seen as regional policy instruments to increase extra-regional mobility. The Asian ASEM countries, whose students continue to be attracted by Europe, are making an effort to promote intra-regional mobility within Asia. In this context, cross-regional mobility will require innovative policy solutions. Governments can play an important role in at least the following areas:

- Making regulations and/or providing incentives for universities to create joint curriculum programmes with short-term mobility. This will increase access and affordability for students.
- Giving extra support and encouragement to students in certain subject areas. From the perspective of democratic equality, teacher education students should be encouraged to study abroad given their future role and long-term contribution to the internationalisation of education. Also, mobility opportunity should be created for the students in those specialised fields that require a critical mass of students, high level of technology, and massive investment in research facilities in order to develop quality educational provision and centres of excellence. From the perspective of social efficiency, the mobility of doctoral candidates is especially relevant, as their research, even when conducted abroad, can meet the needs of their country of origin.
- More mobility opportunities should be offered to students, teachers and trainers in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in ASEM countries.
- At ASEM ME5, the ministers of education discussed the collaborative options of integrating technology into educational delivery methods, e.g. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), to change the conventional physical mobility mode of study, and to widen access for unconventional students, such as those in employment, older students, those with family commitments, or those from a lower socio-economic background.

There is no shortage of policy ideas, but the challenge is how they can be turned into policies and actions. Perhaps a special ASEM expert working group on mobility could be set up. With

experience and expertise from both Asia and Europe, such a group could critically review the current initiatives in all the ASEM ME chair's conclusions, utilise research on mobility, and propose priorities to concentrate resources on a few viable projects in a coordinated manner.

Finally, it is evident, through the ASEM policy review process, that academic mobility manifests a complex negotiation between different political, economic, and intellectual/cultural agendas. This necessitates education policymakers to work across sectors, and consider a variety of inter-related factors that influence patterns of academic mobility. These include domestic capacity, economics, demographics, labour market requirements, and immigration policies. Given the diversity and disparity among ASEM countries and their education systems, the ASEM higher education process should prioritise collaboration and innovation for intellectual advancement and equity, rather than paving the way for gaining bigger market shares of international students.

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